



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS  
DIVISION OF LABOR STANDARDS

## CHILDREN INVOLVED IN YOUTH PEDDLING/DOOR-TO-DOOR SALES

Employment of youth under the age of sixteen in any occupation considered to be door-to-door sales, or in any other kind of "street occupation", is prohibited. The prohibition does not apply to charitable entities (church, school, scouts, etc.).

We receive many complaints indicating the number of businesses illegally employing children in Missouri to conduct door-to-door sales (also known as street peddling) for profit could be increasing.

Although there are legitimate businesses raising funds for anti-drug education efforts, some use this message for personal gain. These door-to-door operations can be found in many states across the country. While they appear to operate independently of one another, the basic sales pitch is the same.

The founders of these companies insist that the sales promote the development of youth responsibility. We find alarming instances of young people in the employ of these street operations who become either victims of, or participants in, criminal activity.

Some door-to-door operations in Missouri consistently maintain their primary purpose is to provide substance abuse awareness information to schools. School district officials have been unable to substantiate the existence of this drug awareness program.

In addition to exploiting children, these "anti-drug" campaigns threaten to trivialize the efforts of valid anti-drug campaigns. An experienced operator who is now active in the Kansas City area was quoted by the Springfield News-Leader as saying; "Why would you want to work with a stupid organization like D.A.R.E.? They're taking up time at school that could be used for learning."

Education and a heightened awareness provide our best defense in fighting those who seek to exploit our children. If you are approached by a young person selling candy (or any other item) to finance a purported anti-drug and/or pro-youth campaign, we advise you and any potential buyer to make the following inquiries of the young seller;

- ◆ "Tell me more about what the money supports."
- ◆ "Name some schools that your campaign has worked with."
- ◆ "How old are you?"
- ◆ "Where is your supervisor?"
- ◆ "Do you have a solicitor's permit?"
- ◆ "How much do you personally make from each sale?"

Generally a pointed inquiry will reveal to the wary buyer whether or not the operation is all that it claims to be. If you know of a street trades operation that fits the above description, please notify the Division of Labor Standards at 573-751-3403.

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**DIVISION OF LABOR STANDARDS**  
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# Guidelines for Children Involved in Door-to-Door Sales or Youth Peddling

For children involved in any type of door-to-door sales or youth peddling operations, the Missouri Division of Labor Standards provides recommendations to ensure our children's safety. Certain types of operations such as Girl Scouts or school activities are legal in Missouri, but guidelines should still be followed.

1. Always contact our Division to assure the legality of the operation. For other child labor resources, check the Young Worker Safety and Health Network web site [www.stw.ed.gov/youngworkers/index.htm](http://www.stw.ed.gov/youngworkers/index.htm) or the Interstate Labor Standards Association web site [www.ilsa.net](http://www.ilsa.net).
2. Always make sure parents or guardians have the employer's name, address, phone number, schedule and place of work.
3. Always ensure that children work with a buddy.
4. Always have adult supervision in the immediate area.
5. Never allow children to travel farther than 10 miles from home.
6. Always have an emergency plan in place (what to do if the child is dropped off on the street corner; is being taken across state lines; is asked to do something illegal, etc.)
7. Children should be instructed to never enter anyone's home.
8. Check with the local police or city/county clerk to see if the employer has a license or permit to operate.
9. Be sure the children know their rights under the law.

If door-to-door sales or youth peddling is occurring in your neighborhood, please ask the child involved for the following information. Report it to the Division of Labor Standards immediately. Time factors are critical for us to help effectively.

1. The employer's and organization's name.
2. The item(s) they sell.
3. Locations where the children are being picked up and dropped off. Are they staying overnight anywhere? If so, where?
4. Places (addresses if possible), dates and times they are working.
5. Names, ages and contact information of children working.
6. How long and how late do they work?

Keep copies of any literature provided, including flyers used for recruitment (usually found around schools, telephone poles or grocery store bulletin boards).